

Statement to FSIS Employees by Catherine E. Woteki, Under Secretary for Food Safety

Office of the Under Secretary
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WASHINGTON, June 22, 2000 - "I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the families and friends of the two USDA compliance officers and the California state investigator who were shot yesterday at Santos Linguisa Company, a small sausage processor in San Leandro, California.

"These employees spent their careers protecting the health of American consumers and I am saddened by their deaths. Every day, more than 7,500 FSIS front-line personnel and 1,500 field office and headquarters employees ensure that federal meat and poultry regulations are met. We are all troubled and saddened by this tragedy.

"USDA will be working with local law enforcement officials and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to support a full investigation into this crime and appropriate follow up.

"This morning, I spoke with consumer and meat and poultry industry representatives. I reminded them of our mutual goal of ensuring consumers receive only the safest food possible. I also reminded them that it is time to lower the rhetoric on food safety issues and to find a way to work together to resolve these issues. An atmosphere of mutual respect must be maintained in working toward our common goals."

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